

invention were, at the time the claimed invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person. Both Matsuura and the claimed invention are, and were at the time the invention claimed in the application was made, owned by or subject to an obligation to assign to Minolta Co., Ltd., of Osaka, Japan. The assignment of the claimed invention was recorded on September 9, 2001, at Reel 012224, Frame 0739, and the assignment of Matsuura to Minolta was recorded at Reel 010803, Frame 0144. Accordingly, Matsuura is not available as prior art, and claims 1-5 and 8-11 are allowable.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on Fischer in view of Matsuura and Shima (U.S. Patent No. 6,369,909). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As noted above, Matsuura is unavailable as prior art. Consequently, claim 7 is allowable.

Applicants solicit an early action allowing the claims.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief, including extensions of time, and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing Docket No. **325772026900**.

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Respectfully submitted,

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